

## AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method, ~~performed by a computer~~, for processing airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, comprising:
  - receiving a request, associated with a first passenger, for ~~the~~ a preferred category of seating on a flight;
  - determining, by a computer, if the preferred category of seating is available;
  - providing notification that the preferred category of seating is available;
  - guaranteeing the preferred category of seating for the first passenger;
  - assigning ~~[[a]]~~ the first passenger to a “flexible” seat assignment within the guaranteed category of seating;
  - reassigning the first passenger to a different “flexible” seat assignment within the guaranteed category of seating on the flight based on ~~another~~ a request associated with a second passenger; and
  - converting the “flexible” seat assignment to a “permanent” seat assignment on the flight.
2. (Currently amended) A method, ~~performed by a computer~~, for processing airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, comprising:
  - receiving a request, associated with a first passenger, for at least one preferred category of seating for a flight;
  - determining, by a computer, if the at least one preferred category of seating is available;and
  - guaranteeing the at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising providing notification that the at least one preferred category of seating is available.
4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the request is received from a travel agent.

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5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the request is received from [[a]] the first passenger.
6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising assigning [[a]] the first passenger to a “flexible” seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of seating for the flight.
7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 6, further comprising reassigning the first passenger to a different “flexible” seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of seating on the flight based on ~~another~~ a request associated with a second passenger.
8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein guaranteeing the at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger comprises reassigning ~~at least one~~ a second passenger within ~~the at least one passenger's at least one~~ a guaranteed category of seating associated with the second passenger.
9. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the request is received when an airline reservation is being made.
10. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the request is received after an airline reservation is made and prior to a check-in process.
11. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the request is received during the check-in process.
12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the request is received when [[a]] the first passenger inquires about a flight reservation.
13. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred category of seating is a window seat.

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14. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred category of seating is an aisle seat.
15. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred category of seating is a bulkhead seat.
16. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred category of seating is an emergency exit row seat.
17. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred category of seating is a seat adjacent to a certain passenger.
18. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred category of seating is a seat away from a type of passenger.
19. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred category of seating is a seat in a particular section.
20. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred category of seating is a seat in a particular row.
21. (Original) The method of claim 2, further comprising defining a maximum number of preferred categories of seating allowable within the request.
22. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:  
converting the “flexible” seat assignment to a “permanent” seat assignment; and  
prohibiting reallocation of the permanent seat assignment.
23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs for all passengers simultaneously.

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24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs when check-in begins.

25. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs when boarding initiates.

26. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs as the first passenger inserts a boarding pass into a boarding pass reader.

27. (Currently amended) A method, ~~performed by a computer~~, for processing airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

receiving a request, associated with a first passenger, for multiple preferred categories of seating for a flight;

determining, by a computer, which of the multiple preferred categories of seating are available; and

guaranteeing at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, further comprising providing notification that at least one of the preferred categories of seating is available.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, further comprising receiving an indication that at least one of the available preferred categories of seating is acceptable.

30. (Original) The method of claim 27, further comprising defining a maximum number of preferred categories of seating allowable within the request.

31. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the request is received from a travel agent.

32. (Currently amended) The method of claim 27, wherein the request is received from [[a]] the first passenger.

33. (Currently amended) The method of claim 27, further comprising assigning [[a]] the first passenger to a “flexible” seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of seating.

34. (Currently amended) The method of claim 33, further comprising reassigning the first passenger to a different “flexible” seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of seating on the flight based on ~~another~~ a request associated with a second passenger.

35. (Currently amended) The method of claim 27, wherein guaranteeing the at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger comprises reassigning ~~at least one a second~~ passenger within ~~the at least one passenger's at least one~~ a guaranteed category of seating associated with the second passenger.

36. (Original) The method of claim 33, further comprising:  
converting the “flexible” seat assignment to a “permanent” seat assignment; and  
prohibiting reallocation of the permanent seat assignment.

37. (Cancelled)

38. (Currently amended) A system for processing airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

means for receiving a request, associated with a first passenger, for ~~the~~ a preferred category of seating on a flight;

means for determining if the preferred category of seating is available;

means for providing notification that the preferred category of seating is available;

means for guaranteeing the preferred category of seating for the first passenger;

means for assigning [[a]] the first passenger to a “flexible” seat assignment within the guaranteed category of seating;

means for reassigning the first passenger to a different “flexible” seat assignment within the guaranteed category of seating on the flight based on ~~another~~ a request associated with a second passenger; and

means for converting the “flexible” seat assignment to a “permanent” seat assignment.

39. (Currently amended) A system for processing airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

means for receiving a request associated with a first passenger, for at least one preferred category of seating on a flight;

means for determining if the at least one preferred category of seating is available; and

means for guaranteeing the at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger.

40. (Original) The system of claim 39, further comprising means for providing notification that the at least one preferred category of seating is available.

41. (Original) The system of claim 39, wherein the request is received from a travel agent.

42. (Currently amended) The system of claim 39, wherein the request is received from ~~[[a]]~~ the first passenger.

43. (Currently amended) The system of claim 39, further comprising means for assigning the first passenger to a “flexible” seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of seating.

44. (Currently amended) The system of claim 43, further comprising means for reassigning the first passenger to a different “flexible” seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of seating for the flight based on ~~another~~ a request associated with a second passenger.

45. (Currently amended) The system of claim 39, wherein means for guaranteeing the at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger comprises means for reassigning ~~at least one a second~~ passenger within ~~the at least one passenger's at least one a~~ guaranteed category of seating associated with the second passenger.

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46. (Original) The system of claim 39, wherein the request is received when an airline reservation is being made.
47. (Original) The system of claim 39, wherein the request is received after an airline reservation is made and prior to a check-in process.
48. (Original) The system of claim 39, wherein the request is received during the check-in process.
49. (Original) The system of claim 39, wherein the request is received when inquiring about a flight reservation.
50. (Original) The system of claim 39, further comprising means for defining a maximum number of preferred categories of seating allowable within the request.
51. (Original) The system of claim 43, further comprising:  
means for converting the “flexible” seat assignment to a “permanent” seat assignment;  
and  
means for prohibiting reallocation of the permanent seat assignment.
52. (Original) The system of claim 51, wherein means for converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs for all passengers simultaneously.
53. (Original) The system of claim 51, wherein means for converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs when check-in begins.
54. (Original) The system of claim 51, wherein means for converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs when boarding initiates.

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55. (Currently amended) The system of claim 51, wherein means for converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs as the first passenger inserts a boarding pass into a boarding pass reader.

56. (Currently amended) A system for processing airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

means for receiving a request, associated with a first passenger, for multiple preferred categories of seating on a flight;

means for determining which of the multiple preferred categories of seating are available;  
and

means for guaranteeing at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger.

57. (Original) The system of claim 56, further comprising means for providing notification that at least one of the preferred categories of seating is available.

58. (Original) The system of claim 57, further comprising means for receiving an indication that at least one of the available preferred categories of seating is acceptable.

59. (Original) The system of claim 56, further comprising means for defining a maximum number of preferred categories of seating allowable within the request.

60. (Currently amended) The system of claim 56, further comprising means for assigning [[a]] the first passenger to a “flexible” seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of seating.

61. (Currently amended) The system of claim 60, further comprising means for reassigning the first passenger to a different “flexible” seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of seating for the flight based on ~~another~~ a request associated with a second passenger.

62. (Currently amended) The system of claim 56, wherein means for guaranteeing at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger comprises means for reassigning ~~at least~~



~~one a second~~ passenger within ~~the at least one passenger's at least one a~~ guaranteed category of seating associated with the second passenger.

63. (Original) The system of claim 60, further comprising:  
means for converting the “flexible” seat assignment to a “permanent” seat assignment;  
and  
means for prohibiting reallocation of the permanent seat assignment.
64. (Cancelled)
65. (Currently amended) A system for processing airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, the system comprising:  
a storage device storing a program;  
a processor in communication with the storage device, the processor operative with the program to:  
receive a request associated with a first passenger, for the preferred category of seating on a flight;  
determine if the preferred category of seating is available;  
provide notification that the preferred category of seating is available;  
guarantee the preferred category of seating for the first passenger;  
assign ~~[[a]]~~ the first passenger to a “flexible” seat assignment within the guaranteed category of seating;  
reassign the first passenger to a different “flexible” seat assignment within the guaranteed category of seating for the flight based on ~~another a~~ request associated with a second passenger; and  
convert the “flexible” seat assignment to a “permanent” seat assignment.
66. (Currently amended) A system for processing airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, the system comprising:  
a storage device storing a program;

a processor in communication with the storage device, the processor operative with the program to:

receive a request, associated with a first passenger, for at least one preferred category of seating;  
determine if the at least one preferred category of seating is available;  
guarantee the at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger.

67. (Currently amended) A system for processing airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, the system comprising:

a storage device storing a program;  
a processor in communication with the storage device, the processor operative with the program to:

receive a request, associated with a first passenger, for multiple preferred categories of seating;  
determine which of the multiple preferred categories of seating are available; and  
guarantee at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger.

68. (Canceled)

69. (Currently amended) An article of manufacture for causing a computer to process airline reservations for a preferred category of seating on a flight, comprising:

means for causing the computer to receive a request, associated with a first passenger, for the preferred category of seating;

means for causing the computer to determine if the preferred category of seating is available;

means for causing the computer to provide notification that the preferred category of seating is available;

means for causing the computer to guarantee the preferred category of seating for the first passenger;

means for causing the computer to assign [[a]] the first passenger to a “flexible” seat assignment within the guaranteed category of seating;

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means for causing the computer to reassign the first passenger to a different “flexible” seat assignment within the guaranteed category of seating based on ~~another~~ a request associated with a second passenger; and

means for causing the computer to convert the “flexible” seat assignment to a “permanent” seat assignment.

70. (Currently amended) An article of manufacture for causing a computer to process airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

means for causing the computer to receive a request, associated with a first passenger, for at least one preferred category of seating;

means for causing the computer to determine if the at least one preferred category of seating is available; and

means for causing the computer to guarantee the at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger.

71. (Currently amended) An article of manufacture for causing a computer to process airline reservations for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

means for causing the computer to receive a request, associated with a first passenger, for multiple preferred categories of seating;

means for causing the computer to determine which of the multiple preferred categories of seating are available; and

means for causing the computer to guarantee at least one preferred category of seating for the first passenger.

72. (Currently amended) A method, ~~performed by a computer~~, for processing reservations for a preferred category of service at a venue, comprising:

receiving a request, associated with a first consumer, for the preferred category of service;

determining, by a computer, if the preferred category of service is available;

guaranteeing the preferred category of service for the first consumer;

assigning ~~an~~ the first consumer individual to a “flexible” assignment within the guaranteed category of service;  
converting the “flexible” assignment to a “permanent” assignment; and  
prohibiting the reallocation of the permanent assignment.

73. (Original) The method of claim 72, further comprising providing notification that the preferred category of service is available.

74. (Currently amended) The method of claim 72, further comprising reassigning the first consumer individual to a different “flexible” assignment within the guaranteed category of service based on ~~another~~ request associated with a second consumer.

75. (Currently amended) The method of claim 72, wherein converting the flexible assignment to a permanent assignment occurs for all consumers individuals simultaneously.

76. (Original) The method of claim 72, further comprising defining a time when the flexible assignment is converted to a permanent assignment.

77. (Original) The method of claim 72, wherein the preferred category of service is for seating.

78. (Original) The method of claim 72, wherein the preferred category of service is for a hotel.

79. (Original) The method of claim 77, wherein the seating is for a vehicle of transportation.

80. (Original) The method of claim 77, wherein the seating is for a stadium.

81. (Original) The method of claim 77 wherein the seating is for a theatre.

82. (Original) The method of claim 77 wherein the seating is for an arena.

83. (Currently amended) A method, ~~performed by a computer~~, wherein reservations for a preferred category of a service are finalized based on a transition point, the method comprising:  
    assigning, ~~by a computer, an~~ first consumer individual to an assignment within the preferred category of the service, wherein the assignment is only tentatively reserved such that the assignment may be changed to a different assignment within the preferred category of service to accommodate a request associated with a second consumer; and  
    converting the assignment to a reservation, at the transition point, wherein the reservation is guaranteed to be within the preferred category of the service.
84. (Previously presented) The method of claim 83, further comprising:  
    prohibiting the reallocation of the reservation.
85. (Currently amended) The method of claim 83, wherein the transition point is collective and the conversion from the assignment to the reservation occurs simultaneously for all consumers individuals associated with assignments to the service.
86. (Previously presented) The method of claim 83, further comprising:  
    defining the transition point, wherein the transition point includes a time when the assignment is converted to the reservation.
87. (Previously presented) The method of claim 83, wherein the preferred category of the service is for seating.
88. (Previously presented) The method of claim 83, wherein the preferred category of the service is for a hotel.
89. (Original) The method of claim 87, wherein the seating is for a vehicle of transportation.
90. (Original) The method of claim 87, wherein the seating is for a stadium.

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91. (Original) The method of claim 87, wherein the seating is for a theatre.
92. (Original) The method of claim 87, wherein the seating is for an arena.